



Jeffrey Avrum Weinberger

March 25, 1947 - September 22, 2021

Jeffrey Weinberger, founder of iconic Jeffrey's Restaurant and one of the most beloved and respected restaurateurs in Austin, passed away Wednesday, September 22, 2021 at the age of 74.

Jeff was born on March 25, 1947, the oldest of 4 children of Sarah and Julius Weinberger. As a youngster Jeff loved sports & excelled in music, winning scholarships as a nationally recognized young cellist. His life changed abruptly at age 13 when his mother was diagnosed with cancer. He got a hardship drivers license to shuttle her to chemo treatments until her death 3 years later, while also helping to raise his younger brothers and sister. After graduating from Thomas Jefferson High School, he enrolled at The University of Texas at Austin as a pre-med major and became an active member of the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity. Always fascinated by science, he convinced a nurse to train him as a surgical tech and was eventually asked to work the trauma cases at Brackenridge Hospital.

His medical ambitions got sidelined when what began as a brief trip to England ignited his passion for food and ultimately led to a 3-year adventure in Europe studying old school culinary arts. Upon his return to Dallas, he opened his first restaurant, Blooms, a casual European fine dining establishment in a remodeled home in an underserved area of town. Next came his namesake restaurant in the Clarksville area of Austin: Jeffrey's Restaurant. At Jeffrey's, he established a culture of casual but fine dining without pretense and without a tuxedo-clad waiter hovering over one's shoulder. It would not be unusual to see diners at one table dressed in elegant cocktail attire while those at an adjoining table, eating the same menu in jeans and t-shirts. Jeff went on to found several more notable restaurants and bars in Austin, including Clarksville Café, Tortugas, Wiley's, Shoreline Grill, and Cipollina. A committed conservationist, he made Shoreline Grill one of the first restaurants in the region to follow sustainable seafood practices by adhering to the Monterrey Bay Seafood Watch.

Through his businesses, Jeff made a significant contribution to the development of

Austin's culinary scene. Even more than his success as an entrepreneur in a challenging business, what set him apart was his way of treating others in the industry. Jeff was the individual who would always take care of others regardless of their background or position, whether that meant helping with medical bills, emotional support, housing, or gifts for their children. Any charity in the city could count on one of his restaurants to donate meals, certificates, or a helping hand, as when at Thanksgiving of every year, Shoreline Grill would cook 100 turkeys for the city's homeless. In 50 years of business, he acquired no enemies.

In his 43rd year, he met the love of his life: a graduate student at The University of Texas and a witty force of nature named Tina Rauch. Tina has been his constant companion for the last 31 years, and they went on to have two fine sons to whom Jeff was endlessly devoted: Sam, a U.T. graduate who works in digital marketing, and Steve, a recent graduate of The University of Texas School of Law.

Jeff Weinberger was a person of enormous decency and kindness, a gentle soul with an intense intellectual curiosity who treated every person he met with warmth, interest, and respect. He searched with all his heart for the good in others and manifested authenticity and integrity every day of his life. So many people carry Jeff in their heart, in no small part because we knew he also carried us in his. He reached out with the whole of his spirit, and we will try to hold onto his warmth. To pass along what he taught and what he lived through his walk. To remember Jeff Weinberger's life as a testament to all that is good on this earth.

After a long illness fought with tremendous grit, Jeff passed away peacefully on the afternoon of September 22nd, 2021. He was laid to rest at a small private ceremony two days later.

There will be a larger celebration of life in the spring. In addition to his wife and sons, Jeff is survived by his brother Allan Weinberger, sister Tina and her husband Michael Heffernan, nephews Scott Heffernan and Isaac Weinberger, and dear family Annie, Nic, and Madison.

Cemetery Details

Austin Memorial Park

2800 Hancock Dr.
Austin, TX 78731

Tribute Wall

“ To Mr. Weinberger,

I hope your family reads this and I can give a happy memory to them from my time getting to know Mr. Weinberger.

We only met a few times...Cipollina's with my parents and the really fun times going dove hunting in Deep South Texas. He truly was such a gentleman, soft spoken and humble. I was the typical bad shot, tag along that Dr. Shapiro could vouch for as rarely hitting the side of a barn. Everyone was so gracious about my lack of precision but Mr. Weinberger seemed to sympathize (maybe even empathize with my poor shot) more than most.

The first morning we showed up at the designated location, it was a free for all with more dove than I had seen in a lifetime. I became disheartened not by the poor marksmanship of myself but rather the blood letting some of our partners were rightfully unleashing (Kevin...lol). Thus, I returned to cool off under an old mesquite tree and have a beer to calm my nerves.

That's when Mr. Weinberger and his son separately came to talk to me sensing my discomfort. I had grown up around hunting but it has just never been my thing. We discussed his son's impending departure for Colorado College (wonderful school) and my lack of interest in hunting. It was brief but full of substance. Your husband/yall's father was so good to me. He made me feel accepted, understood and not judged. I didn't ask for the kindness or sympathy but he just made me feel like I had a friend and that I was appreciated for having the sensitivity for these little birds. It sounds strange but the warmth and compassion stuck with me the whole trip. When we had to clean and break down the day's haul, he encouraged me to be involved like I had done a damn thing. H propped me up when he knew he didn't have to....

He was a good man. I believe in the Pacific Islander concept of Mana. I felt connected to your dad/husband. I am grateful to have know him albeit briefly. Sometimes in life, we only need a few substantial conversations with someone to truly ascertain someone's character.

My family and I are so sorry for his loss. My mother brought up the Statesman to Fort Worth yesterday and I was very disheartened to hear of his passing. Austin lost a great guy and I'm proud to have known this gentleman.

RIP Mr. Weinberger

Kindest regards,

Laurence Conor Tokaz

JL

“ Hi Tina,

You may not remember me, but Jeff and Ron and Dave hired me as the Bar Manager at The Westbank Fishcamp. My wife also worked for Ron, Peggy, and Jeff at the Shoreline Grill. We both have many fond memories and know that we were blessed to have him in our lives. I remember getting ready to purchase our first house. As tips were a significant element of our income, we did not have the normal payroll stubs demonstrating a consistent income. No worries....Jeff had his account create several checks that demonstrated the steady income stream the lender needed to see. That was our first house as newlyweds. I only wish I had made good on my intentions of following up with him. The world lost a kind mind with a gentle and caring soul. Thank you Tina, for pouring yourself into Jeff's life to help replenish everything he gave of himself. God bless you, John & Megan Larkin

John Larkin - October 27, 2021 at 09:55 PM

PM

“ *When we owned P&M Air Systems, Inc. in Austin area we were fortunate to have his restaurants as our customers over the 32 years we were there. One cannot work around Jeffrey without becoming his friend. One example of his generosity was when I mentioned I planned to bring my wife, Millie, to Jeffrey's for our anniversary. He said to let him know when we came in. Of course we were served a most beautiful, delicious dinner, with appetizers and dessert, so special. We will never forget it nor his ever-present gracious and giving nature. The world, and especially Austin, was truly blessed with Jeffrey's presence on this earth.*

Paul Meinscher - October 01, 2021 at 06:02 PM

TW

“ Jeffrey was my dad's best friend, (Mike Wallace), and my older brother Brian's godfather, for over 50+ yrs. I heard so many stories growing up from my father about Jeffrey and they were all about what an interesting, compassionate, loyal, giving, friend, and just overall loving human being Jeff was. Even as my dad was dying late last year, Jeff and Tina came down to Dallas just to bring my dad a Thanksgiving dinner spread. My dad was soooooo excited to get to see them and eat turkey dinner with them. Just one more small example of the selfless love Jeffrey Weinberger regularly showed the world. RIP my friend. As my dad was quickly passing back in Jan, I helped my dad call Jeffrey on speakerphone because my dad was too weak to hold a phone from his deathbed to say goodbye. I wish I had recorded that conversation.. To hear two grown men in their 70's lay out their hearts and memories for one another, after all those many yrs they'd been friends. It was sad, gutwrenching, and beautiful all in the same moment. They left with Jeff telling my father, "Don't you worry about dying Mike, because I'm gonna come see you soon and we'll pick up where we left off". Todd Wallace

Todd Wallace - September 28, 2021 at 03:28 AM

ED

“ Dear Tina, I am so sorry to hear about Jeff. He was the kindest, gentlest person I have ever known. It was always such a joy to run into him because he made you feel like the most special person in the world. Jim and I will miss him.
Love,
Ellen Dorsey and Jim Susman

ellen dorsey - September 27, 2021 at 07:58 PM

SM

“ So sad to learn of the passing of this great man, who had such a profound impact on the cultural and culinary zeitgeist of Austin. He was always so thoughtful and kind to me and my family. My sincere condolences to Allen and Tina. Godspeed, friend.

—Sean McKenna

Sean McKenna - September 27, 2021 at 06:06 PM

WT

“ With prayers for Tina, a longtime friend, and all the family...may his memory be ever present in your hearts.

With blessings,

Warren and Dianne Terry

warren Terry - September 27, 2021 at 09:33 AM

SC

“ Goodbye to my longtime friend, fraternity brother and college roommate and one of the finest, most gentle men I have ever known. Jeff was a friend to all who knew him, and he never met a stranger. Although we had not spoken in several years and I was unaware of his illness until today, I want to offer my sincere condolences to Tina and his family. Jeff, and the good that he brought to this world will be sorely missed. Scott Caven (Houston)

Scott Caven - September 26, 2021 at 05:46 PM

AM

“ My late husband and I always celebrated momentous occasions at Jeffrey's in it's early years. My sorrow at his passing is equal to the joy his talent brought to us and surely thousands more. Peace, prayers and blessings.

Anita Moore - September 26, 2021 at 03:39 PM



“ I was so saddened to learn of Jeff's passing. My sincere condolences to all of Jeff's family. While our paths have not crossed in recent years, Jeff was a steadfast friend to Steve throughout his life, and Jacob, Abraham and I will always remember him as a thoroughly kind and honest man.

Cherie Deutchman

Cherie Deutchman - September 26, 2021 at 12:32 PM

TC

“ A mutual friend connected us and I was fortunate enough to work for Jeff as the kitchen manager at Tortuga's for a year. A wonderful, thoughtful and quietly gracious man who truly cared about all of his employees and abetted the careers of more than a few. It was a privilege, and we will all miss him. An unassuming, iconic local giant in the industry we both loved. And better human being.

Terry Conlan - September 26, 2021 at 11:53 AM

SC

“ Jeff was one of the first people that I met when I moved to Austin in 1975. We shared interests, employees, and friends. I will miss him much. Steve Clark

Steve Clark - September 26, 2021 at 08:38 AM

MK

“ I am so sorry to read of Jeff's passing. He was a very good man, a client and a friend for many years.
He was fair, friendly and generous in all dealings.
My deepest sympathies to the family.
Wish you peace at this difficult time.
Mike Kennedy

Mike Kennedy - September 26, 2021 at 06:34 AM



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Jeffrey Avrum Weinberger.



September 25, 2021 at 02:56 PM

AF

“ 1 file added to the album Jeffrey Weinberger Service



Austin Natural Funerals - September 24, 2021 at 04:28 PM